

# Life of the Spirit

A BLACKFRIARS REVIEW



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Volume V

FEBRUARY 1951

Number 56

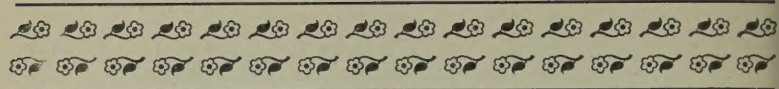
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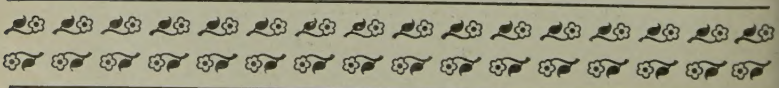
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# Life of the Spirit

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## THE WORSHIP OF OUR LADY<sup>1</sup>

BY

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.



WE should remember', says St Thomas Aquinas commenting on the *Ave Maria*, 'that of old it was a very great thing for angels to appear to men, and also was it the right thing for men to show them reverence. Thus to the credit of Abraham it is written that he showed hospitality to angels and revered them. But that an angel had shown reverence to man was a thing unheard of until the time when he reverently greeted the Blessed Virgin saying: *Ave, Hail.*' Thus in the eyes of Catholic theologians the veneration of our Lady began at the Annunciation when she was accorded honour and respect by the messenger of God himself. And it is an undeniable fact that those first simple words of Gabriel's have been taken up and repeated with such an increasing volume and intensity that they have become almost the hallmark of the Catholic. These simple words of praise have found their echo in every age. The third and fourth century pictures of the Madonna surrounded in the glory of her nimbus, the excited cry of the Ephesian populace when they learned that their veneration of the Mother of God—'Theotokos'—was vindicated, the dedication to the Blessed Virgin of some of the earliest churches after the peace of Constantine, the consequent introduction of her feasts into the calendar—all this reveals the fact not only of the close association from early times between the sacred liturgy and the veneration of the Virgin, but also that she was accorded a type

An article from a forthcoming volume *Ways of Worship* (S.C.M. Press) which will contain principally the Report of the Theological Commission on Ways of Worship; the article is reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of the volume.

of honour and respect not apparently granted to any other human being. To trace the development of this fact from those beginnings until its mature intensity at the present time need not occupy us here; it is too evident. The average Catholic man or woman has shown his need for a spiritual Mother not only in his private intercessions but also in his public worship of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

This characteristic of Catholic life and worship came eventually to demand some explanation and safeguards. The worship of the Virgin was evidently not to be confused with the worship in its strictest sense signifying the honour offered to God alone. By the thirteenth century the theologians had invented a terminology to meet the facts. For it was clear that no Christian could worship the Virgin as he should worship God; it was equally clear that Christians as a general rule paid far greater respect to the Blessed Virgin than to any other individual appearing in the Church's calendar as worthy of veneration in the liturgy. To meet these facts the theologians said that worship given to God was to be called *latria*, an adoration which was to be shown to God alone, or to the humanity of Christ as being one with the divine person. The honour and worship paid to the saints was called *dulia*, a word adopted from the current Greek for veneration. And then, for lack of a better word, they called the type of greater respect shown to our Lady by the manufactured term *hyper-dulia*, which simply means that the veneration shown to her is *super*, 'above', that shown the ordinary saints. So far, then, as the facts are concerned it is obvious that Catholic veneration of the Virgin soars above and beyond that of any other saint.

These distinctions, however, were not invented as a kind of convenience to guard against idolatry on the one hand and to explain a quantitative difference in worship on the other. The honour paid to the blessed Virgin and to the saints in the liturgy and devotion of the Church is one of the best examples of the union of prayer with dogma which is expressed by the phrase *lex orandi, lex credendi*. The distinctions between the different types of cult arise neither from a mere denial that the Christian adores our Lady nor from a quantitative judgment of the actual extent of her cult compared with that of other saints; but they rest on the natures of those who are to be

generated and consequently upon the actual demands they make upon our respect. Almighty God does not—indeed cannot—leave us free to select what type of honour we should show him. He is man's creator, so that man depends on him for the entirety of his being—his personality and everything about him that is of any reality. Man is bound, therefore, by the natural law according to which he is constructed and under which his life is to be conducted, to offer him the complete subjection of all his powers of mind and will and of all his being. This he must do by means of an integral form of worship called 'sacrifice', rededicating his life to the author of life. No one but God may be offered this type of veneration, for no one is, or could be, so subject to another creature however elevated. Thus the sacrifice of the Mass, which is the most complete act of adoration, is never offered to our Lady, even though it is very frequently offered to God in her honour. This essential worship which springs from the roots of man's being has, as we have said, been called *latría* or adoration, rather as a scientist might decide to call a certain radiation 'alpha' as distinct from 'gamma'. The reality is there whatever the name, and no Christian in his senses would recognise the blessed Virgin Mary as the infinite author of his being, nor would the Church ever willingly permit such idolatry.

Creatures of God's making, however, have often some divine touch of beauty or holiness which entitles them to a special kind of respect. We must pass over here the veneration paid to the things that belong specifically to the Second Person of the Trinity, such as his humanity or the cross upon which he died—created things which do receive some share of the adoration accorded to the Son of God; here we are concerned with a human creature, a human person. Now the nobility of a human person is something which is not simply an inanimate mirror of divine glory. We revere the memory of Shakespeare, not merely that of his 'muse'. For it is man's personal superiority or nobility that calls forth respect and esteem among his fellow human beings in different ways. The mayor's office as superior in a city entitles him to be called 'his worship'. So also, just as a certain office or position demands honour, the presence of certain virtues in a person calls forth from his fellow men a respect which amounts to

reverence. His holiness originates from God, but it is due in some measure also to his co-operation with God. So the saints gather round them the devotion and reverence of their fellow Christian creatures. These qualities can obviously never reach the independence and infinity which belong to God alone, but they can establish a man head and shoulders above his fellows. This honour or worship has been called, for the sake of a name, *dulia*; and, although it can be of all sorts according to the nature of the nobility revered, such as civil *dulia* or honour paid to a mayor or a king, we are speaking here of that special type of nobility which belongs to supernatural holiness. In this case particularly the respect due to a person on account of the many graces he receives from God will be a respect which not only includes God in its orbit but which also recognises a certain dependence upon the holy one under God.

Thus the reverence of a saint is not simply a question of telling him in respectful terms what a fine fellow he is, but also of asking him for certain favours which are his to share in some way with all who come to him. This is best seen in relation to the doctrine of the mystical body, without which neither liturgical worship nor the reverence of saints can be understood. Since these highly favoured men and women are so favoured precisely by reason of a greater share in the infinite life of God, their nobility is theirs not simply for themselves but also for all men who are joined to God in any way in this same divine life. The saints are as it were the particularly well-to-do members of a very closely knit and loyal family. The worship they receive, then, is one not only of praise but also of petition, so that the liturgy often pours forth a stream of prayers to them, as is heard in the litany of the saints.

In such reverence our Lady very evidently shares. She is indeed a member of this heavenly nobility so that she necessarily enjoys great praise and receives a great number of petitions. But it is also evident that since her position in the plan of redemption is unique, her superiority must also be equally unique. We have seen how the Angel recognised the special reverence due to Mary even before she had become Mother of God. That was because she was born immaculate and full of grace. But such nobility in Mary up to that moment

might still have been regarded as being only in degree different from the nobility of other holy people who shared the same life even though Mary had it to the fullest extent. But when she had become Mother of God and had become wholly bound up with her Son's work of redemption, beginning with her *Fiat* to the Angel and concluding with his *Fiat* on Calvary, shared so intimately by her, she had acquired a nobility to which no other creature could attain. She became, in consequence, Mother of all Christians, and Queen of heaven; and as Catholics began to realise the uniqueness of her position, so veneration towards her deepened and expanded into something which was unique not merely quantitatively or in degree, as being accorded to her more than to any other saint, but also in its very nature. The liturgy became studded more and more with feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a process which has continued to the present day as the theology of Mary's place in the plan of redemption still continues to develop. And Catholics naturally recognise a greater dependence upon their supernatural Mother than upon any other saint in heaven. They turn, therefore, in a unique way to their Mother, praising her for being the Mother of her Son, for being full of grace, for being the cause under him of our joy and our salvation. For this reason, the Catholic worships our Lady in a way that he worships no one else—certainly not in the way he worships God, but also not in the way he worships other creatures for God's sake. And this veneration arises not so much from anything in the worshipper, be it from a psychological need for a 'universal Mother' or from an emotional superstition stirred by visions and apparitions, but rather from the special veneration due to the qualities in herself, qualities which are of a different nature from those of others. The Catholic does not worship our Lady because the Church or his forefathers have urged him to do so, but because this unrivalled position and quality of the Mother of God call out for a special veneration, her honours and dignities are not put upon her from outside, as the idolater decorates his graven image with qualities from his own imagination. Mary the mother of Jesus radiates her special qualities from her person and draws this Catholic worship to herself. Catholic worship of the Virgin Mary, then, is something demanded—not something merely given. It is a

unique type of *dulia* or honour which is called forth by the special nobility of the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven.

Yet that honour, in the eyes of the Catholic, can never be seen as apart from God, still less as a rival to God's own honour. For Mary is the fairest of his creatures, and if she is praised for her beauty, so much the more praise and love does the Author receive. Every hymn to the blessed Virgin leads the singer to the Father, and to her Son in the love of the Holy Spirit. '*Corde et animo*', the Church says in her liturgy, 'In heart and spirit we sing glory to Christ in this celebration sacred to the superexcellent Mother of God—Mary'.

NOTE I.—Not every Catholic theologian regards *hyperdulia* as being different in *kind* from the *dulia* granted to the other saints. But in view of the great progress in the development of the doctrine concerning Mary's place in the redemption, it seems likely that this dissent will become a minority.

NOTE II.—Many non-Catholics seem frightened of the word 'worship' as applied to our Lady. But it is an unwarranted restriction of its meaning to limit it to the idea of adoration. A glance at the Oxford Dictionary will show that the word may be used for any type of *dulia*.



## OUR LADY AND THE GLOBE



URING the Marian Congress which preceded the definition of the dogma of the Assumption last November, G. Gaetano di Sales, who leads a movement *Pro Rogalitate Mariae*, gave a paper on the meaning of the 'Miraculous Medal' and of the symbol of our Lady with a globe in her hand. He pointed out how specially indebted he was to this Marian devotion as he had been brought back to the faith by a special grace received in the Chapel of the Apparitions from which the devotion sprang. The following summary will convey the substance of the paper read in Rome.

La Salette, Lourdes and Fatima have tended, by their modern popularity, to overshadow an earlier apparition which took place in Paris and from which the others have sprung as from a hidden seed. Those later apparitions have elucidated and developed what was expressed originally in 1830 to a

simple Sister of Charity in Paris, now canonised as St Catherine Labouré. This good sister lived in obscurity throughout her life; and it is perhaps her heroic silence that provides the surest criterion of the authenticity of the apparitions.

When she was on her deathbed many years after the event he referred to the martyrdom of her life. The reason for this 'martyrdom' seems to lie in this: our Lady appeared to her in 1830-1 and as a consequence of the apparition the 'Miraculous Medal' was designed and approved after a canonical investigation ordered by the Archbishop of Paris. The medal was designed on the evidence of one of the apparitions, during which our Lady stretched forth her arms towards the world and countless rays of light streamed from her hands, from the tips of her fingers, until the whole earth under Mary's feet was flooded and submerged as by a torrent of light.

So much for the medal. But this was not all; on a previous occasion the Blessed Virgin had appeared holding in her hands a globe, which represented the whole world; and she held it 'as if she were making an offering to God', praying for the world.

The Miraculous Medal, then, was officially approved in 1836, but it did not contain the entire message given to St Catherine Labouré. For the rest of her life—another forty years, for she died only on the last day of the year 1876—the saint begged and pleaded that a statue should be designed to represent the Lady of the Globe and so to spread the first part of the Blessed Virgin's message. But no one would heed her entreaties, regarding it as too new and probably not important. It was this contempt for her wishes that caused the saint the intense suffering which on looking back she could only describe as a martyrdom. For it seemed to her that until this statue with its gesture in supporting the globe was known and understood, the most important part of the mission entrusted to her remained unfulfilled.

The first phase of the apparition contained in fact the essential part of our Lady's message. The second appeared as a result of the first; so that to propagate the latter without the former was to reveal the effect without the cause. Without the first, the second could not have happened. For the first phase of the apparition revealed three special privileges proper to our Lady as the Mother of the Son of God.

The first time that our Lady appeared to St Catherine Labouré she showed herself crushing the serpent's head under her feet, and all round her in a kind of halo ran an inscription in letters of gold urging man to pray to the Madonna as 'conceived without sin'. Here quite clearly manifested before the definition of the dogma and the more celebrated appearances at Lourdes we find the Immaculate Conception.

Secondly, in the symbol of the globe we are made to understand the Universal Mediation of Mary. For it was brought home to the saint that this represented the whole world in a very formal sense. Our Lady seemed to be showing St Catherine how her mediation followed the same pattern as the supreme mediation of Christ her Son, as St Thomas summarises it, (i) *satisfaciendo et interpellando*; (ii) *exhibendo praecepta et dona Dei hominibus*.

Finally the Universal Sovereignty of our Lady is quite clearly depicted by the way the *whole* globe is supported by her; she holds between her hands what is within her power and authority; she is the Queen of All. The figure of our Lady with the globe sums up all the different kinds of royal standards under which she is invoked throughout the world in all countries and continents; from Castelmonte near Trieste to Loreto, from Star of the Sea to Notre Dame de France, from La Salette to Lourdes, the Virgin of the Pillar to Fatima, Walsingham to Einsiedeln; from the *Saida Mariam* of the Arab to *Mat' Russkoï Semli* (Mother of the land of Russia) or Pao-Ting-Fou of China. Our Lady with the globe is the synthesis of Mary Queen of the World.

St Catherine Labouré was unlettered, but our Lady spoke to her in such a way that she was able to understand the profound truths which were contained under those symbols. The saint left few writings, but in two of these we find the account of the conversation she had with our Lady on the eve of St Vincent's day, 1830. Our Lady said to her: '... My child, the Cross will be despised; blood will flow in the streets [Here she paused on account of the anguish she evidently felt] My child, she said, the whole world will be in sorrow. . . . And afterwards, peace.' Later, shortly before her death, the saint set down in a pencilled note the essential aspects of the figure with the globe. 'Oh, how lovely', she wrote, 'to hear

people say: Mary is the Queen of the Universe. It will be a time of peace, of joy, of happiness which will be of long duration. . . . She will be carried all round the world on a banner.'

The saint seems to have understood quite clearly that the upheavals in the world were to begin in forty years' time, that is, in 1870, and it has been suggested that that year marked the beginning of the troubles which culminated in the two world wars. Other predictions contained in the writings of the saint are said to have been fulfilled, so that many look forward to some 'time of peace' when the Queen of the Universe will be granted her gracious reign.

However this may be, the devotion to Our Lady with the globe was at length approved by Leo XIII, and although it has so far never been taken up with the same enthusiasm as the 'Miraculous Medal', the two aspects of these private revelations are now able to develop hand-in-hand. And certain it is that the figure of the Virgin is indeed being carried abroad round the world—the *peregrinatio Mariae*.

Dr Gaetano di Sales concluded his paper on this special revelation of Mary's queenly position in the universe with the hypothesis: if from the hearts of all men there breaks forth the acclamation of Mary as Queen, it will be a sign of a universal gratitude to her, the most holy and immaculate Mother of God, for having in her mercy saved us.<sup>1</sup>



## IN PREPARATION

During the course of this year, 1951, it is hoped to devote special numbers of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT to the *English Martyrs and the spirituality of Martyrdom*, as well as to the question of *Secular institutes* in view of the latest documents and developments.

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Dr di Sales does in fact propagate 'The International Movement for the Royalty of Mary' whose headquarters are at via Quintino Sella 8, Roma, Italy.

## A LEAGUE FOR PENANCE

BY

M. B.

**I**N a recent review of Thomas Merton's *The Waters of Silence* the reviewer concludes with this stirring challenge: 'Thomas Merton writes for the world, and he writes, as he must, of a special glory of Catholic life that, despite its wonderful growth, inevitably remains the privilege of a small minority. A harder and more insistent task must be to reveal the depth and delight of the common life of the members of Christ whose lot is to live in the world, so that they, in union with the hidden ones, may sanctify it. Would that there were another Merton who might show, with something of his skill and grace and popular appeal, how the "Waters of Silence" may flow into a world that dies for lack of them.'

The world does indeed show signs of this dying, a dying not merely through the major crises of international strife and threats of atomic warfare. These are the most obvious signs of the moribund condition of the world, but they are the external manifestations of more personal diseases in many individuals' hearts. The hideous cruelties and oppressions which have appeared at our very doors spring up from a generation that tries to live without God or religion. Despite the external signs a great deal of kindness and compassion and readiness to help remains in the most apparently godless heart; and yet this natural goodness is so hedged about by indifference that it cannot emerge from its own fortress to make contact with God. On occasion a sudden shock of disaster, of war or disease will draw the heart out towards God—and then the world has invented a substitute in easy sentiment which deadens the deeper need for God and the soul soon retires again within the walls of its indifference.

In this way suffering has become more and more meaningless. We do not have to visit the horrifying concentration camps, where men are made into senseless beasts, to realise this fact. It can be found close at hand, for example, in our own hospitals. Here quite often the name of God is mentioned only as a swear-word; chaplains are only welcome when there is

thing specifically religious about them. People die and are taken to the mortuary without a prayer on their lips or on anyone else's. Not that anyone in particular can be blamed for this state of affairs. The patients are brought up without knowledge of God and they do not want him even when they are in agony or dying.

What is perhaps worse is that those who do believe in God and profess to love him so often adopt a similar attitude and may be less conspicuous even in natural goodness. Having been fed on the Eucharist, the sacrament of love, men and women can be more unkind and indifferent to the needs of others than the pagan. Hardened by tales of distress, they confine themselves to their own needs—possibly 'spiritual' needs, but certainly their very own. Their own sufferings may be attended to, and 'offered up', but outwardly there appears a hardened shell of complacency, together with lack of sympathy and even bigotry which allows the pain of others to pass unheeded.

Certainly the only answer to this state of the world is that love—the mighty power of the Charity of Christ which can shatter all hearts, draw them out of their self-made fastnesses, and renew the face of the earth in its very agony. This is the only way 'the Waters of Silence' can flow afresh. Those who live in the world must be linked with those 'hidden ones' by some special act of charity which will be aimed at converting the word in that very point where it is reaping the foul harvest of its godlessness and from which it is itself seeking an escape. The charity of Christ offers no opium for the pain of man, but alone gives the power to turn that very pain into a creative act of regeneration and new life.

How can such a vast programme as that of turning the endless pain of the world into channels of love be even thought out? It would seem that our Lady's requests, particularly at Lourdes and Fatima, point to the answer. She asks for universal prayer and penance. The Blessed Virgin has apparently come specially to intervene in the great calamity of the world; and her intervention seems to be addressed in a special way to those who are willing to consecrate themselves as her penitents and fellow sufferers or victims with her Immaculate Heart. That is perhaps the most significant message that comes from Fatima.

It has been suggested that this special invitation from the Mother of God might most effectively be answered by some sort of League which would emphasise this aspect of her call and give people throughout the world a concrete way of acting up to the invitation simple in its application and turning vague or general aspirations into a practical channel. It would be a League of Penance.

Such a League should be wide enough to include the sick and suffering with those who are active and healthy of all ages. If it is to be of general appeal it should have no complicated set of rules, nor even many set prayers—for the sick especially can find such additional pieties a burden and to those who are busy they become merely an anxiety. In its foundations it must consist simply of men and women who are willing to offer themselves in union with the sorrowing Mother and the infinite sufferings of her Son. At Fatima she said, 'See how my divine Son is hurt by these sins'. And her appearance is so often in an attitude of sorrow; she looked down in sadness upon Lucia, her tears flowed at La Salette. She seems to ask people to co-operate with her as she stands at the foot of the Cross. She wants them to forget self and to become in some way her penitents, to make amends for the indifference of the world which does not know sin nor how it hurts her Son. And the root of this penitential life is simply that of the FIAT of the agony in the garden, the FIAT which has always been the characteristic word of Mary. She asks, then, for companions who will stand with her at the foot of the Cross and share in the creative and redemptive suffering of her Son for the conversion of sinners.

The spirit of such a movement can be found in almost every aspect of our Lady's life, in her 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord', and in her similar commission to others—'Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye'. She was in particular a contemplative of the highest order, living in the world and undergoing the ordinary penances of a daily life in the society of men who did not recognise her Son. The penance she asks for is a simple, ordinary, daily thing—to stifle at birth all unloving, jealous thoughts of others, to wish for them what one should wish for self, to see God's will perfectly fulfilled in his way. This penance can overcome not only the bitterness of

ffering but the hardness of heart, too, and casualness and difference towards others. In such simple ways the true spirit of penance can break forth into love and unite the spirit closely with that of our Lord—‘Lord, who dwells in me, do thou act in and through me as you did on earth’.

Such might be the spirit of a League of Penance. It would have to be conducted without the modern means of propaganda, in secret and under cover of a very normal and ordinary life in the world. A bond could be fashioned between small groups or individuals, between the hale and hearty and the weakly sufferer. These simple people could unite in making expiation for the sins of the world in union with our Lady’s offering, immaculate heart and that of her Son. It would be enough for those who felt drawn in this way to make some formal act of consecration, a promise or even a vow to remain ever penitent of the blessed Virgin Mary.

The League might follow some such rules as these:

- (a) A formal vow to become a victim with the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- (b) Daily Mass and Holy Communion where possible. A spiritual offering through our Lady in union with the sacrifice of the Mass can be made. Our Lord’s sacrifice is undoubtedly the meeting-place for all who belong to such a group.
- (c) The daily recitation of some part of the Rosary.
- (d) Recollection and prayer during the day according to circumstances.
- (e) A regular retreat for those who belong to the League.
- (f) In general to offer to our Lady the sufferings of those one knows or hears of; and a resolution to show others the love which our Lord has for them.
- (g) It might be possible to provide some sort of link with members by means of a ‘circular letter’.

It might be fruitful for those who are interested to consider this idea during the penitential period of Lent and so to make that season more profitable and in closer union with the other of Sorrows.

# THE STRUCTURE OF RELIGIOUS POVERTY

BY

OSWIN MAGRATH, O.P.



THE love of Lady Poverty is not a simple thing, a plain virtue, but a complexus of spiritual qualities which extend to the whole of the spiritual life, since poverty is one of the fundamental means of perfection, and therefore something which involves the practice of perfection. In order to be able to envisage it properly and grasp its function, it is important to distinguish clearly the virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost which play an immediate part in the practice of holy poverty, and make up its spirit. Poverty deals with man's relationship to material things, and their perfect use, or non-use. The virtues concerned are: firstly, on the human supernatural level, liberality and magnificence; then, on the divine level, the gift of fear of the Lord; further, in relation to God, these are perfected by humility and hope, and in relation to man by the reciprocal relations of almsgiving and gratitude. Lastly the apostolic poverty of the gospel, summed up by St Jerome in the phrase *Nudus nudum Christum sequere*, 'Naked follow the naked Christ', and the institution of religious poverty sum up this complexus of spiritual qualities as perfection and as means to perfection.

## LIBERALITY AND MAGNIFICENCE

Although the motives and driving force of evangelical poverty come from beyond the bounds of material things, in itself it is fundamentally a virtue which determines the right and the perfect attitude to material things, and makes man and man's action good in relation to them. This virtue is liberality, completed in its larger aspects by magnificence. The desire to have a virtue called poverty arises in part from a confusion of poverty with its motives, and in part from a misunderstanding of the nature of liberality, which is primarily a perfection of soul, and only secondarily a use of things, and finds its highest realisation when things are abandoned as far as this world allows. The word expresses better than poverty the nature of this perfection of soul, a freedom, a readiness to use up and get rid of things for a good purpose; poverty

spirit better expresses the motives which lead to perfect liberality and magnificence. But unless the normal everyday perfection in the use of material things is kept at its basis, poverty as an idea can easily call into the vices of avarice or prodigality, and lose touch with reality.

Liberality is a disposition of the will which restrains the passions of love and desire of material goods, and of pleasure and pain in their possession and loss. It thus involves a whole right attitude of mind and will, and consequently also of feelings, towards things, and it results in a proper use of things. It is the virtue which poverty of spirit must use all the time. Material goods are for use; the proper attitude to them is to use them for a purpose, especially in giving them to others. Perfect liberality is ready to give all; religious poverty vowed to God does give all, and detaches mind and feelings radically from things, and is thus an outward expression of perfect liberality, and tends to develop that virtue gradually, by compelling the regular practice of it in a high degree of perfection. The religious must use his vow of poverty to learn to love, desire, enjoy, regret and use things only as means, without attachment to them as ends in themselves, so as to attain perfect liberty with regards to things and to use them as a master.

The chief vice opposed to liberality, and therefore to religious poverty, is that of avarice: the attachment to things for their own sakes, and so an improper love and desire of them, a wrong joy and sadness about them, and a defective use of them; an unwillingness to give, an unreadiness to see things consumed in good use, an avarice in acquiring goods. This is a capital sin, one of the fundamental tendencies of human nature, for there seems to lie happiness in the security of possession and the self-sufficiency it gives. Religious poverty seeks a different self-sufficiency; one based on trust in God's providence with a capacity to stand alone, being ready to do without all but God. But it must always be on its guard against the recurring tendency to hold on to things for themselves, instead of regarding them as things to be used. The opposite vice of prodigality is not so dangerous; it is the lack of a proper carefulness about things so that they can be put to a good use. The religious, regarding all as God's property

and that of the poor, will be careful not to waste; yet will save so as to be able to spend more effectively, not just for saving's sake.

Magnificence completes the virtue of liberality: the large use of material goods to carry out big and difficult plans. The religious must have this virtue, since the abandonment of all goods to do great work for God, whether contemplative or active, is a supreme work of magnificence; those engaged in active works will continually be called upon to spend goods (not indeed their own) on a magnificent scale for the glory of God and the common good; while the contemplative's use of such goods as he needs must also be large in view of the great end which they serve. They must be great-minded in their use of everything and never niggardly, never afraid to see goods used up on a large scale, nor yet thriftless, wasting large sums on small projects. Even the work of the most humble individual religious is always part of some great work for God and souls, and requires to be done in a large-hearted and generous way to fit into the whole.

#### THE GIFT OF FEAR AND THE BEATITUDE OF POVERTY

Perfect poverty of spirit is an effect of the Gift of Fear, since it goes beyond the normal human ideal of the perfect use of things and aims at total abandonment, and therefore total dependence upon God for all. Its source is therefore a sense of reverence for God as the fatherly source of all good, and the abandonment of all glorying in other good things, in order to cling to God in everything and to take all from his fatherly hands. The poor in the Scriptures are especially those who depend upon God for all, and such is the aim of religious poverty. It implies a life of adoration of God's holy will, other things being taken and used only in dependence on his will and without any attachment. But, absolutely speaking, the Gift of Fear tends to absolute denudation of all created goods, so as to possess God alone. It is only tempered by the exigencies of the ends which God wills us to pursue. Desire is wholly for God and his riches; its reward is the kingdom of heaven, the possession of God's riches. It raises liberality and magnificence to a divine level: the use of material things in a godlike way, without any need for them or attachment to

em, since all need and all attachment are satisfied in God. They become far removed from a spirit which is always counting things, a concealed avarice, and are ready to use much little just as God wills. Creatures are appreciated as God appreciates them; man is freed to enjoy creatures in a way which he cannot do so long as he has not abandoned them. Joy is born in the common goods of nature, instead of in personal possessions, and so a sense of kinship with all men and all natural things is bred. A new sense of the brotherhood of men and the fatherhood of God comes into being; for they no longer depend on God and fellow men and nature for all their needs, and are ready both to give and to receive freely and gratefully. It is complacency in riches owned that avoids suffering, casts it on to others, refuses to suffer and to love.

#### HUMILITY AND HOPE

Magnificent liberality, driven by the Gift of Fear to refusal to seek good outside God and a perpetual tendency to strip man of all but God, holds a precarious balance between pride arising from its great ideal and despair owing to the difficulties of its attainment: it needs the virtues of humility and hope to be perfectly itself. Humility enlarges the motives for evangelical poverty by considering the nothingness and sinfulness of man and his utter dependence upon God, and so corrects the tendency to act proudly from man's own strength, and to attribute things to self. Humility springs from the reverence for God given by the Gift of Fear, and is a knowledge of what we are, and a restraint from being above ourselves.

It proclaims that all material things are received from God, and demands sincerity of conduct in the light of this conviction, so that things are only used as entrusted to us by God. We have no claim on anything at all: absolute poverty is the standard; things are only for our use. Humility goes further: the sinfulness of man is known, and how creatures are a snare and a danger to the unworthy self. Things are to be used in fear and trembling, and reduced to a minimum. The sinful man is judged worthy of punishment, and there will be joy in having less than is necessary as a penalty for its sin and a medicine for its weakness. However great the works undertaken, all will be done in complete dependence upon God,

uniting perfect magnificence with perfect humility. Religious poverty thus springs from humility and tends to develop humility and this virtue brings us close to God's absoluteness and to our own nothingness, and excludes the intrusion of any creature into this pure dependence.

The restraint of humility is balanced by the encouragement of hope. The magnificent aim of seeing God's kingdom first supposes that lesser things will be provided. The resources, material, physical and mental, will be given. But all this is in the supposition that God's kingdom is being sought first. In proportion to the spirituality of the work done will be the hope in God's providence; but in so far as material things are sought, the promise is less sure. Indeed, where the work is primarily spiritual it will be undertaken in direct dependence upon God's providence. The normal means of raising funds will often be excluded deliberately in the interests of the spirituality of the work, which might be compromised by seeking the approval of the world, by becoming involved in excessive material cares, or by being dependent upon money and not upon God. Religious poverty builds on the providence of God and not on the securities of this world. It acts in this way both in the big undertakings of a community and in the daily small needs of the individual, for though a community may enjoy some property and security, to the individuals all is part of God's providence and by way of alms.

#### ALMSGIVING AND GRATITUDE

The life of religious poverty in relation to others is dominated by the act of charity which is called almsgiving, and the virtue of gratitude which is the response to it.

On the one hand the good works of religious are performed by way of alms: the giving to one in need, out of compassion, for God. What is given is primarily a spiritual work of mercy, and any material goods or expenses involved are given together with the spiritual gift. In this way all use of material things by religious subserves the spiritual good of others, and so has the character of an alms. Those who receive spiritual or temporal benefits from religious are indeed bound by way of friendly justice to recompense the religious, and in this sense the material things received by them are earned; but it is not

relationship of strict justice, since it is not a contract which can be enforced, but a debt of fairness in friendship, in so far as when one does a service to another it is only fair that the other should make the best possible return. From the point of view of the religious, again, the work is not done for the sake of the temporal reward, and this is only a means necessary in order to be able to continue to give freely and more abundantly. The mendicant ideal presses this freedom of giving and receiving still further, by requiring the labourer who earns his life by spiritual good deeds to ask that wage as a free gift only, and renounce even his right in friendly justice. The virtue of liberality here recedes behind charity: liberality (or the spirit of poverty) is the necessary preparation and condition giving freedom in relation to worldly goods, which makes possible the perfection of charity which expresses itself in a life of universal almsgiving.

The response to the almsgiving of others is the virtue of gratitude: this makes recompense to a benefactor by respect, praise, remembrance, prayer, comfort, advice, care for spiritual welfare, and if necessary by material aid also. Since alms are received as a gift of charity, not of justice, the recompense is to be measured by charity and not by justice. Now love has this peculiarity: the more it is given, the more it is due. Hence the obligation of gratitude is endless: it means a constant and ever growing relationship of charity and friendship in God with the benefactor.

The spirit of poverty thus opens up the path to perfect love with the neighbour. Detachment from material goods, readiness to expend them liberally and magnificently, destroys the aggregating effect of personal possession, and opens the heart to the needs and sufferings of others. On the other hand, dependence on the free giving of others for material needs is a means of increasing in humility, detachment and freedom from the ties of worldly goods, and makes the whole world kin.

#### NUDUS NUDUM CHRISTUM SEQUERE

St Jerome crystallised poverty in a phrase which has ever since rung down the ages: 'Naked follow the naked Christ. Hard, lofty, difficult; but the prizes are great.'

The poverty of our Lord in the gospels, the poverty pre-

scribed to the apostles in the ministry, the poverty shown in the Acts of the apostles, have made concrete and personal the attraction of evangelical poverty, especially for those engaged in apostolic works. They follow Christ stripped of all: in his freedom to be without things; in his liberty to use and enjoy things in simplicity as gifts of his Father; in his joy in natural things and fellowship with them; in his friendship with the poor; in his union with God, renunciation of his own will and devotion to his Father's will; in his humility, sorrow for sin, reparation; in his having nothing and possessing all things. Here are great prizes of naked following of the naked Christ.

The apostle must be poor: to be able to give God a total and disinterested service, to reveal the transcendent nature of the kingdom, the pearl for which all is sold; to show the absolute and paternal sovereignty of God, to whom all belongs, from whom all is received, who is the poor's only security; to recognise the poor as the preferred of God, to be able to make contact with them and understand their spiritual, mental and material life, so as to be able to win them.

#### RELIGIOUS POVERTY

The systematised poverty of religious orders attempts to secure the benefits of evangelical poverty while retaining some stability and organisation of religious life. The removal of care about material things is necessary for the perfection of the spiritual life, not merely as an escape from worries and cares which would impede it, but from the very nature of perfection which means total giving of self to God. Religious poverty accomplishes this by a complete renunciation of at least the *use* of goods: this is common to all forms of the vow. The religious has the use of nothing as his own, takes all from God, uses all in complete dependence on God. If rightly used, all the virtues spoken of must be practised in a high degree of perfection in all the events of daily life. The essential is that personal property, if not altogether renounced, can never be in the use of its possessor, but must be ceded to others as to use and usufruct; so that every material thing in the use of a religious is completely in the hands of the superiors, and the individual has a right to precisely nothing with which he is in contact. The religious has a right to nothing: the use of things:

must be determined exclusively by what is necessary to do God's will. This is not to be measured by a merely utilitarian standard, but by the absolute demands of God's transcendence, our nothingness, and the nakedness of Christ. Hence the religious life, a life of tending towards perfection, provides the benefits of evangelical poverty in a form in which both the highest perfection of the spirit of poverty is possible, and in which the imperfect are able to learn poverty of spirit gradually, by being compelled, so long as they live the religious life, to make acts of the virtues which compose it, acts which normally suppose and develop the interior virtues themselves.



## CARTHUSIAN ASCETICISM<sup>1</sup>

BY

A CARTHUSIAN

*I am come so that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.*—John 10, 10.

**I**F you were to ask each of us, 'Are you willing to die to yourselves?' we should all reply sincerely, 'Yes; we are willing. . . .' But it is not enough to say or even to think so, for it is possible to deceive ourselves. Dying to ourselves is no theoretical problem composed of abstract thoughts and reasonings; nor does it consist in making resolutions for the morrow which is always later. . . . It means putting them into practice. To die to ourselves *externally* is to detach ourselves from all ties, whatever they may be; but this detachment must be complete, whole, irrevocable, and there must be no looking back. This is going a long way. . . .

Because we are Christians we should be detached from all exterior things. Our vows secure this detachment; they are made to free us from all slavery, to break the ties by which sin has bound us. But we must beware, for we bring with us into the monastery our own nature, with all the tendencies that sin has infused into it. This nature sometimes attempts to take its revenge without our realising it, to recover for itself what

it can; it would like to attach itself to the objects which we use. When nature sees itself deprived of everything, it believes itself lost, and tries to attach itself to trifles and absurdities; this seems foolish, but it is so. And then, instead of practising the vow of poverty, we surrender to a proprietary instinct. This is just the opposite of death to ourselves.

Nature which suffers from having to submit to a rule tries to make up to itself by seeking its own comfort, and by living heedlessly in spiritual sloth. We may end by so adapting ourselves to the austerity of our cell that we live there a kind of bourgeois life, enclosing ourselves in the well-mannered selfishness of bachelorhood. This again would be the exact opposite to death to self. There would be no room for the divine life; self would fill everything and block all approaches to the soul.

In the sphere of the spirit, it is the same. We run the risk of attaching ourselves to our own ideas, our own judgments, our own ways of thought, to this manner of living which is the particular form of our personality and for which we feel an affection. In these subtler things, self is more hidden. It disguises itself more easily behind praiseworthy pretexts. . . . Among people of the world who pretend to use those abstractions which they call truth, common sense, good taste, etc., it is self which is served and which becomes the object of a real cult. We spend our whole day considering how to safeguard our dignity, the effect we shall produce, what people will say and think of us, how we can force others to accept our ideas—in short, how we can make self triumph; and life becomes a play in which everything is calculated and ordered to an effect that must be produced to place self in a good light. As long as all this is not simplified, as long as we do not manage to forget ourselves, and as long as self fills the whole soul and overflows on all sides, how can life enter? There is no room for it. All this is contrary to the religious life; it represents a mentality incompatible with it. But if in religion we seldom go so far in the wrong direction, the danger of giving way to this tendency always exists, and to a certain degree the evil itself remains. We do not see clearly the designs and subtle bonds of self; self-love is to be found in everything and we are only vaguely conscious of it. We are attached to our own ideas, and our own way of seeing things, not for the pure love of truth

as we pretend, but because they are *our* ideas and *our* outlook. Thus self takes its revenge, but secretly and in disguise, so that when we hear death to ourselves spoken of, we turn to our neighbour and do not think of looking at ourselves.

If with all this we succeed in leading a regular life, if we fulfil the letter of the rule and submit to certain mortifications, all this which is indeed excellent and necessary can contribute to the increase of illusion and the nourishment of self-love. We think ourselves good religious. We may be externally, but it is only a veneer of perfection; internally, love of self vies for place with the love of God. Charity is relaxed; intercourse with God is consequently imperfect, and the divine life cannot freely reach the soul. Moreover, what will become of it? All space is so filled with self! Death does not empty it; life can only infiltrate little by little. As long as we are so full of ourselves, our own ideas, tastes and self-esteem, there is no room for an abundant life; we vegetate.

What is the remedy? It is always the same: to forget ourselves instead of looking to ourselves; let us be direct, seeking only God in the things and ideas that we have; giving God as sustenance to our minds and hearts; beginning to put him first in our preoccupations and love, and little by little he will pervade all; he will end by eliminating all the rest.

Now self must be forgotten; but how can we forget ourselves? Our minds and hearts and faculties have need of sustenance. Instead of offering them self, we must give them God.<sup>2</sup> When our minds and hearts are made his captives, are seized and filled with him, we will not think any more of ourselves. This is the simplification of everything; true Carthusian simplicity. But we cannot arrive at this perfect simplicity without many struggles. For when we think that we are dead to all, there still remain the roots and remnants of self. Dying to ourselves is a most long and difficult business.

To die to ourselves and to live for God would seem two very different things. The ideas are indeed different, but in reality, in practice, they are one and the same thing, for in the

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<sup>2</sup> It is not a question of sustaining ourselves with abstract thoughts. Here, through God, we listen to the Blessed Trinity, above all, to the Son of God, the Word Incarnate, to the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, the proper object of our contemplation here below. (cf. Gardeil: 'Christ-Consciousness', Blackfriars Publications.)

measure that we die to ourselves, in so far as we forget ourselves, God enters into us; it would be equally true to say that in the measure that God enters into us, we die to ourselves and forget ourselves. In the measure that the divine life penetrates and grows in us, the self in us diminishes, is absorbed, transformed or eliminated by it.<sup>3</sup>

I say transformed, absorbed, eliminated, for everything in us is not bad; that only is bad which comes through sin, and that must be driven out. But our faculties, our nature, even our passions are not completely bad. They have all been warped and unbalanced, but the Divine Life restores them to order little by little and re-establishes all our activities anew, so that they conform to the original plan of God.

So, to die to ourselves is not to annihilate ourselves; it is to drive out sin, certainly, but for the rest it is simply to put things in order. But we must beware and notice that here too we can easily deceive ourselves. We can say, 'To put ourselves in order? But we can restore this order in ourselves by practising virtue.' It is often a grand wile of the devil to reveal an excellent goal to us, so that in attaining it we miss a better. . . . Here, understand me clearly, virtue is necessary, but if we were to say, 'I want to be virtuous in order to empty myself of myself, to reduce everything to nothing in myself', this might well succeed only in making us more pleased with ourselves, filling us again with ourselves, increasing our self-esteem and finally putting self in the place of God, so consolidating the disorder that we wish to turn out.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly we must be virtuous, but as Christians we must be so without thinking of it. We have not come to the monastery to cultivate virtue; we have come to give ourselves to God, that is to say, to surrender ourselves to him in such a way that he may be master in us. The goal is God; why do we want to run after anything but him? Let us then have only God in view, and in order to do that, let us forget ourselves. Let us seek him, and all the rest will be added. Let us put

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<sup>3</sup> Contemplation which fixes our gaze on God and divine things, the allegiance which makes us comply with the divine will, and the considerate service of our neighbour, are the indirect means, more efficacious than direct methods, of forgetting ourselves. 'To want to forget something is to think of it', wrote La Bruyère.

<sup>4</sup> Here it can only be a question of the moral virtues, for those of faith, hope and charity which have God himself for their object, must be exercised always.

Christ at the centre of our thoughts, desires and preoccupations. Nothing is better calculated to destroy the self-centredness that chokes us than a generous turning towards Christ.

I insist on this point because I see the selfishness of souls . . . among the best of those who ought to reach a high degree of union with God, too many are held back in the way. Because their attention is focussed only on virtue and mortification, they do not see far enough. Their life becomes in part a kind of pious routine, congealed as it were by these practices, and the life of grace does not grow as it ought.



## AN APOLOGY

The Editor of *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* and the author of *Some Books about the Bible* in the last issue of the journal (January) wish to apologise to Fr Cullan, O.P., the well-known American theologian, for referring to his death. The unfortunate error arose from the fact that Fathers Cullan and McHugh have together written so many valuable works on Scripture and theology that they appear in many readers' minds almost as one man. Fr McHugh, O.P., died two years ago. The editor and author sincerely regret any distress this reference may have caused Father Cullan.



## FUTURE NUMBERS

The MARCH issue of *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* will be devoted to the question of '*Meditation and Contemplation*' with articles by Donald Nicholl, Michael Hollings, Conrad Pepler, C. Kirchberger, Adrian Bowling, etc., etc.

The APRIL issue will be an enlarged special number on *THE PRIESTHOOD*, to which the Rector of Womersley Seminary, the Vice-Rector of Oscott College and the Professor of Dogma of St Edmund's College are all contributing, together with the Prior of Farnborough Abbey, Father Bede Jarrett, O.P., and many others.

## A SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT



EARLY in 1950 there was announced the death in Rome of the Very Reverend Father Cordovani, O.P., Master of the Sacred Palace and some time Regent of studies at the Collegio Angelico. For the benefit of some readers we may explain that the office of Master of the Sacred Palace was created for St Dominic's sons. In the days when that great Pope Innocent III was using all his endeavours to raise the standard of clerical education, a work for which he saw the Order proposed by St Dominic was so well adapted, one of his chief prescriptions was the establishment of schools of theology with a competent master in every episcopal court. As chief bishop of the Church the Pope himself set the example by establishing such a school in his own palace. Fr Michael Brown, O.P., has very recently been appointed to the office in succession to Fr Cordovani.

Among the papers left by him at his death was discovered a document which deserves to be widely known, composed a few years ago and confirmed by him on the eve of his death. He called it his last spiritual will and testament and it runs as follows:

'My testament as a Dominican is my religious profession. To this I have nothing to add, for whatever I may possess as Master of the Sacred Palace at the moment of my death will belong to the Roman Province of the Friars Preachers.

First, I wish to thank our Lord for all the graces he has given to me during my life; I thank him likewise for all the sufferings I have met with. Whatever good there is in me, my education for example, and whatever good I have been able to do as a religious, I owe it all to my Province. And I feel bound to declare that I feel myself to be a Dominican to the very core of my soul. If I could see my time over again, I declare that I would again become a Dominican.

But I also feel bound to ask pardon of the whole Order for having so poorly realised in myself the ideal we profess of the perfect life, for having so imperfectly corresponded to my religious vocation. I beg for my soul God's pardon and that he may apply to me the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. I beg

also the protection of the Blessed Virgin. Chief of all I beg for the grace of a good death along with final perseverance, and to obtain that I ask the fervent prayers of my brethren and of the many good souls that I have known.

I ask forgiveness of all those whom I have in any way offended, even though I am not conscious of ever having offended intentionally. For my part I forgive all who have ever done me harm, as our Lord bids us in the holy Gospel. And I ask pardon of the whole world for all the sins I have ever committed, for every infringement of the holy law of God of which I have been guilty during the whole of my life.

I call down the blessing of God on all those souls who by their virtue, by the good example they have shown me, by the beauty of their spiritual life and by their care of me (whether they are my brethren in the Order or not), have taught me how to love God and have given me a foretaste of heaven.

I intend to live and die in the bosom of the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, knowing that whosoever is not with the Church is not with Jesus Christ. She alone has divine authority to teach us revealed truth. She is the living school of holiness, and whatever defects there are in the Church spring from the human element which she contains. Moreover they are remedied in and by herself; they in no way compromise the value of her divine character. Souls are saved in the Church and by the Church.

I profess my gratitude towards the Sovereign Pontiff, happy to have been called by him to labour in this delicate and obscure office with which he has charged me. I acknowledge him to be the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

May Saint Dominic obtain for me the protection of the Blessed Virgin, so that through her patronage I may receive the pardon of Jesus my Saviour and eternal life. Amen.

Written with my own hand this eighth day of December in the year 1937.

On the 25th of November in the year 1949, almost on the eve of the Holy Year, I confirm what I have written above and I do so with greater earnestness than ever.'

## MEDITATIONS FOR EVENING PRAYER IN LENT

BY

CHARLES NEWLYN SMITH

### I. THE FIVE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

#### *The Agony in the Garden*

In this mystery let us think of what our Lord suffered in his mind and his soul. 'Not my will, but thine be done.' He forced his human will to conform perfectly to the will of God; and to do that does not lessen suffering but may rather increase it. Yet he did it out of love for us. Let us never shirk the giving up of our own will, out of love for him, both in the big and important affairs of life and also in little things.

#### *The Scourging at the Pillar*

For the first time in his Passion our Lord is made to suffer chiefly in his body; there will be no end now to this suffering until he dies. 'Be not afraid', he had said, 'of them that kill the body and then have nothing more that they can do.' Let us then never be afraid of bodily pain, for he will always give us strength to bear it: let us put up willingly with small discomforts, for love of him.

#### *The Crowning with Thorns*

In this mystery let us think how our Lord submitted to every sort of indignity and insult. The soldiers stripped him, and dressed him in a scarlet cloak, put a crown of thorns upon his head, and a rod in his right hand; they blindfolded him and struck him on the face, and took the rod and beat him over the head with it; they spat upon him, and knelt before him in mockery, saying: 'Hail, King of the Jews'. And Pilate took him out and showed him to the Jews, saying: 'Look, here is your King'. Lord Jesus, help us always to be humble and serene, no matter what others may think of us, or say about us, or do to us.

#### *The Carrying of the Cross*

Until now our Lord has been passive in the hands of the soldiers; now they compel him to do something himself. It is his opportunity; it is the beginning of fulfilment. He has pledged his word to his Father; now he is to carry it out. He takes the weight of the Cross and staggers up the rough

and stony ways that lead to the hill of Calvary. 'If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self, and take up his cross, and follow me.' Let us never shirk what God calls us to do, whatever it may be, however difficult it may seem.

*The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord*

The climax and consummation have come at last. This is the mystery of how God died. God became man for love of us, he lived a man's life for love of us; now God is nailed to the Cross, he is to die on the Cross, for love of us. He has done everything, and it is more than enough. Now there is nothing left but for him to endure to the end. He gave himself up to death for us; let us love him and give ourselves up entirely to him. Let us by every action preach Christ, and him crucified.

II. MEDITATIONS FOR A HOLY HOUR

A. *O Sacrum Convivium, in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis ejus, mens impletur gratia, et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.*

O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is taken and eaten, and the memory of his Passion is renewed. . . .

Lord, give us always this bread. . . .

In your house, O Lord Jesus, every meal is a banquet, for it is you yourself whom we receive as our food and drink. This Sacred Host which we adore on the altar, which we lift up and carry in procession, is your Body, and our food. 'Take ye and eat, this is my Body.' And this Holy Eucharist can never fail to remind us of your Passion, for it is both sacrifice and sacrament. It is the offering anew to God of your sacrifice made once for all on the Cross; it is the fruit of your sacrifice, the constant reminder of what you did for us out of love. 'This is my Body which is given for you, this is my Blood which is shed for you.' 'It is my Flesh, given for the life of the world.' The mystery of this sacrament is beyond feeling, beyond imagination, beyond thought: BUT IT IS TRUE. In these few moments of prayer let us not try to realise it but simply to believe. Teach us, O Lord, to pray now with simple faith, to pray perhaps with few words, or no words at all; to give you simply our attention and our love, content just to be in your presence, to be with you.

Lord, increase our faith. I do believe; Lord, help my unbelief.

B. *Mens impletur gratia . . .* The soul is filled with grace . . .

Lord Jesus, give us grace. It is through grace that you give us life: real life, supernatural life, a participation in your own divine life. And it is through the Holy Eucharist above all that you give us grace, for it is the sacrament we receive more frequently than any other. And in this sacrament, as in no other, you yourself, your Body and your Blood, are our very title to grace. It is the sacrament of your life in us, and of our life in you. 'I am the bread of life.' 'He who eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood, lives continually in me, and I in him.' Through this sacrament, O Lord Jesus, make us grow in grace; let your grace make us grow into your likeness; let it develop in us that divine life which you allow us to share, so that your life in us may shine out upon others. Make us grow up in your grace and in your service.

Lord Jesus, give us grace.

C. *Et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.*

And a pledge of future glory is given to us.

Lord, give us always this bread . . .

No, not always, for this sacrament itself is your pledge to us that some day we shall have no need of sacraments. 'He who eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood enjoys eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' In faith we receive you now under the sacramental species; it is through love that we hope one day to see you face to face in glory. The glory we hope for is no mere glorification of ourselves: it is the fulfilment of love. Through love you gave yourself for us; grant that through love we may find ourselves in you. Meanwhile this Holy Eucharist is at once the proof of what you did for us, and the pledge of its fulfilment in heaven; let us never cease to thank you for it. Through this sacrament, O Lord Jesus, stir up our love for you, that it may be the mainspring of all our actions now, and so bring us to you at the last. Our way may seem long, and the road rough, but you are with us. In this sacrament you give us food and drink for our journey, power to persevere and overcome every obstacle, and a pledge that you will be there to welcome us at the end.

*O Sacram Convivium, in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis ejus, mens impletur gratia, et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.*

## A PRAYER OF THE PENAL TIMES

**A**LMIGHTY GOD, Father of all mercies, and God of all comfort, have mercy on us the afflicted members of thy Catholic Church. Forgive us our sins; give us time to do penance, grace to resist sin, and peace to serve thee in holiness. Comfort us that be prisoners; deliver us that be strangers in dispersion; succour all that be afflicted for confessing thy holy Name. Make us worthy to suffer; give us strength to bear, and constancy to confess. Let no fear nor force remove us from thy unity. Let no craftiness of the Devil deceive us, nor device of men overcome us. Discern, O Lord, thy cause, humble thine enemies, recomfort thy friends, that they may give thanks unto thee, and glorify thy Name in thy holy Church. Grant this, O Lord, for Christ's sake our Lord, that suffered bitter death to make his Church glorious.

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We do not know the author of these words, yet they must have been familiar enough to the persecuted Catholics of Elizabeth's day; or they have been found, written in contemporary hands, on the flyleaves of two books of that period, both in the same collection, but probably reaching it from different sources. One is a Sarum Primer dated 1555 (a general prayer-book for the laity). The other is one of the few extant copies of Edmund Campion's *Rationes Decem* secretly printed at Stonor Park in 1581. The flyleaf of the *Rationes Decem* is partly torn away, mutilating the prayer; the copy in the Primer is complete, but roughly written and spelt, looking rather as though it had been scribbled down from dictation or memory, for there are slight verbal differences (none of which is an improvement). The two versions are here combined to give the best reading; only the spelling and punctuation have been modernised.

This prayer, with its fine, direct vigour of expression and magnificent rhythm, is the work of some unknown genius in the use of English. Who can he have been? I do not think it is Campion's. He could reach heights of his own—read his *Brag!*—but every writer has his typical 'sentence' and Campion's is not that of the prayer. Light on its authorship would be welcome.

In any case, this prayer is more than literature, more than history; surely it is a prayer for today.

## REVIEWS

MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM. By Gershom G. Scholem.  
(New York: Schocken Books; \$5.50.)

If mysticism must be written about, this volume based on lectures given in New York should provide a model of the way in which the subject should be approached. It combines that sympathy for the subject with scientific detachment which such works seldom display. On the one hand, the author takes his subject at its face value and never attempts either to explain it away in other terms, to exploit it in the interests of some theory or thesis, or to apologise for it. On the other, he refuses to be intimidated by it, to become uncritically identified with it, or to take *omne ignotum pro magifico*.

But not only is the book's manner admirable; its matter also is of absorbing interest. It rightly insists at the outset that 'there is no such thing as mysticism in the abstract, that is to say, as a phenomenon of experience which has no particular relation to other religious phenomena'. Quoting St Thomas, and declining further restrictive qualifications, it understands by mysticism any experiential awareness of God, and traces the main currents of such manifestations in post-Biblical Judaism from the Merkabah ('Throne') visions and meditations of the early apocalypses down to contemporary Hassidism. In the course of this long and fascinating journey, it takes a very thorough view of the various and often contrasting 'schools' of Kabbalism, stripped of all the nonsense with which it has become encumbered, and does not disdain the 'anarchism' and 'nihilism' of the Sabbatian heresy.

Many a reader, for whom all this is unknown territory, could wish that these studies could be supplemented with many more texts and quotations from original sources: such few as he is given can only whet his appetite, and the remainder which the Notes leave in untranslated Hebrew will only tantalise his linguistic incompetence. Few instructed Christians could read the book without profit and instruction; but it will leave us with many perplexing problems. The author notes as characteristic of Jewish mysticism, in all its remarkable variety, its astonishing anonymity—the mystical writer (whose very identity is often unknown to us) is almost always concerned solely with describing the Glory of God and its manifestations, hardly ever himself or his own reactions (moreover 'he' is always a he, never a she!). On the other hand, while there is mystical union, there is seldom a trace of mystical identification—the infinite distance between Creator and Creature is always somehow but firmly upheld and realised. The puzzle, which it is no part

of the author's task to solve, is not so much that these features are characteristic of Jewry as that they are not always characteristic of Christianity. The solution of the problem presented by the fact that mysticism in Christendom seems often more akin to Plotinus or Sankaracharya than to anything rooted in the same Bible might illuminate many other mysteries of the ways of God.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

DIE STIMME DER OSTKIRCHE. By Karl Fritz. (Evangelisches Verlagswerk; DM.7.20.)

The *Evangelisches Verlagswerk* in Stuttgart is constantly providing its Catholic brethren with fresh surprises and delights, as it has done by publishing the works of Hans Asmursen and by giving us this extremely attractive and nicely produced book on the spirituality of the Eastern Church by Karl Fritz. This is a subject upon which it is so easy for enthusiasts to lose their heads, and it is a tribute to Pastor Fritz that he has retained his head along with his enthusiasm. Perhaps this is to be set down to his having spent many years in vital contact with the Eastern Churches, four of them as a prisoner of war in Russia. In consequence *Die Stimme der Ostkirche* presents those of us who are interested in Eastern spirituality (but inexpert as well) with the concisest and most readable work that we have yet encountered.

Amongst the most valuable sections of the book is that in which Pastor Fritz illustrates, by quotations, how irrelevant are the accusations of 'anarchy' which Westerners so often direct against the Eastern Churches, and how different the whole question of dogma appears in the eyes of those for whom the liturgy itself is 'lived dogma', requiring no external guarantee. That is a point which touches Catholic critics most, but it is almost the only point in the book which does hit Catholics. For the surprising feature of Pastor Fritz's thesis lies in the very trenchant observations on the poverty of the Protestant tradition as compared with the Catholic tradition. It is surprising, because a Catholic cannot help wondering how Pastor Fritz would himself state the principles which keep him from accepting the fulness of the Catholic tradition which he has so brilliantly illustrated in these pages. It may even be that his personal contacts with Roman Catholics has convinced him that the Church has abandoned the great tradition and smothered the great basic truths of the Trinity and Transfiguration beneath a heap of petty devotions and stifling sentimentality. If so, we can only say '*Mea culpa*'—and that the Church has *not* abandoned the great tradition.

DONALD NICHOLL.

A TREASURY OF RUSSIAN SPIRITUALITY. Edited by G. P. Fedotov. (Sheed & Ward; 25s.)

To assemble representative extracts from a literature of whatever sort of language must always be a hazardous business. And if the literature itself be unfamiliar, the reader is necessarily at the mercy of the anthologist. For most Western Christians the Russian spiritual tradition is a deep mystery. Echoes there have been, and occasionally—as in the case of *The Way of a Pilgrim*—a whole work has become known and loved. But few have been able to judge such a work against the background which alone can give it full meaning.

Dr Fedotov's *Treasury* is welcome, therefore, as a serious and obviously authoritative introduction to a whole literature, beginning with the eleventh-century *Life of St Theodosius* (the first monastic saint canonised by the Russian Church) and extending to within reach of our own times with the *Fragments of a Diary* by Alexander Yelchaninov. The five hundred pages of the collection are not dissipated by short and unrelated extracts. Instead we are for the most part given whole works: lives of saints, spiritual autobiographies (such as that of the Archpriest Avvaum, the seventeenth-century reformer who was burned at the stake), a monastic rule (that of St Nilus), the systematic ascetical writings of John of Cronstadt. And the extracts are linked up by an informed commentary by the compiler, revealing the continuity of Russian spirituality—however modified it may seem to be, as, in different ages and under different hands, it shifts its emphasis, from a severe asceticism to a profoundly mystical contemplation, from a naïve simplicity in prayer to an elaborate technique of self-examination.

For spirituality reflects the world in which a spiritual experience of a world beyond it is in fact enjoyed. The idiosyncrasies of narrative and style, these are often enough a fashion, and beneath our amusement or our amazement there lies a rich continent where God is constantly known and loved, and where that knowledge and love are, however haltingly, declared to men. The unity of mystical life transcends language, race or age, and while there is much, for instance, in the kenotic emphasis of many Russian saints (with their immolatory sense of the literal meaning of Christian suffering) which seems harsh and strange to Western ears, there is never wanting that awareness of incorporation in Christ which is the living principle of Christian life in every place and age.

The *Treasury of Russian Spirituality*, admirably presented and edited as it is, should be of the utmost value to Catholics who wish to respect a tradition that may superficially seem unlike their own. It should, besides, encourage our prayers for the Russian people.

whose true literature this is, and who, please God, may soon be brought back again to these healing waters. I.E.

ACTUAL GRACE AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. By John V. Matthews, S.J. (Mercier Press; 7s. 6d.)

A considerable number of devotional books consist so entirely of pietistic ejaculations that it is difficult to see a long future for them. Father Matthews' study of grace is to be welcomed for having eschewed that tedium, though a reviewer might be misled into fearing the worst when he reads on the dust-cover that it belongs to the 'Recall to the Spiritual Life Series'. It is high time this phrase 'spiritual life' were either given its precise meaning or decently put to death. Living a holy Catholic life is not an exclusively spiritual affair, and Catholics in England, and Ireland, too, are now sufficiently tolerated for us to admit that living a Catholic life embraces politics and business, and everyday routine, and is more than an 'affair of the "spirit".' More important still today, holy men are needed who not only cultivate their 'spirit', whatever that might mean, but holy men who find their religion driving their lives in office and factory and committee-room. Father Matthews himself, however, is rarely guilty of disembowelling the language of religion, though he does occasionally speak of 'souls' when he means persons or people, but in general his writing is marked by clarity, simplicity and deliberation. The simplicity is almost excessive, but it is useful. He has written a book of instruction presupposing nothing except willing readers. He does not attempt to move our emotions but to enlighten our minds. He succeeds. Only twice do we have to pause. In the ticklish question of the relation of grace and nature it would have been helpful to hear a little, though by the nature of the book only a little, of how nature can be predisposed—or not—to grace, and how grace builds on nature. In Chapter XVIII he sets out to show that actual grace does not take away human freedom: but as the question has hardly been raised the answer only creates difficulties; and there is one surprising remark: 'It is generally felt that actual grace took away St Paul's freedom of will for the time being when the saint was struck down on the road to Damascus'. How general? Information about the relationship of grace and nature would again have helped.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

A CHAQUE JOUR SUFFIT SA JOIE. By Isabelle Rivère. (Emile-Paul; 450 fr.)

At a time when men all too frequently utter in despair the cry, 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof', it is refreshing to find a

book with the title '*A chaque jour suffit sa joie*'; and still more refreshing is to read this book, for it contains the meditations of one who has seen something of the joy that is to be found in God, and who has succeeded, in no small measure, in conveying with remarkable freshness to her readers a sense of God's all-embracing love. But this book is not, as might appear from the table of contents, a random collection of thoughts on a select number of liturgical feasts. Basing herself on the Church's liturgy, and making full use of Scripture, the author does in fact give us a very beautiful treatise on Almighty God, and especially God considered as Love—'*la flamme du dévorant amour qu'est Dieu*'. It is the story of God's great act of love for man, begun in the Creation, and culminating in the Redemption. This again is both courageous and necessary at a time when the word 'love' is as often misused and misunderstood as was its synonym 'charity' before it. And because God's love for man finds its highest expression in the Incarnation, the author is more than justified in beginning these meditations with the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady, 'the mother of fair love'.

The present volume is concerned with the first half of the liturgical year, and doubtless some things which are barely touched will be dealt with more fully in the second volume. But reading these meditations we certainly come to a fuller realisation of the Love that is God, of the vital connection between God's love for man, and man's love for God, and of what that means for us here and now in the twentieth century. Written in vigorous language, with a simplicity yet profundity of thought, and in a style which is a joy to read, this book should prove to be of lasting value. We are grateful to Madame Rivère for this fresh contribution to both literature and the spiritual life.

VINCENT PIZZALA, O.P.

THE MYSTERY OF BEING. Gifford Lectures, 1949. By Gabriel Marcel. (Harvill Press; 15s.)

This study of instinct in men and animals has thrown more light on the contemplative life than any book we have seen for some time, and proves that Gifford Lectures on Natural Theology do not necessarily fall outside the interests of a review which aims at kneading all life into food for the spirit. And when the lecturer himself is a Catholic of tremendous insight such as M. Marcel, the relevance of his work will be obvious enough.

There are two sets of people for whom *The Mystery of Being* will prove particularly stimulating: those who teach religion, and those who protect its purity through precise reflection. The first set may seem to be touched only obliquely when we say that M. Marcel, for

large tracts of his lectures, is concerned to strip philosophy of its inadequate and misleading terms and images. Yet his skilful stripping of philoophical imagery suggests that teachers of religion need to do the same for their own subject with the same thoroughness.

Those whose taste it is to introduce precision into our thoughts on religion will derive more direct benefit from the book. Marcel's pages on 'transcendence' and 'experience' should help them to end a tradition which has made spirituality so 'transcendent' as to be irrelevant and has so restricted 'experience' as to make the spirit insubstantial. Contemplatives will be interested to discover Marcel describe contemplation as 'ingatheredness', which is not a state of abstraction from anything, and in fact the attitudes behind ingathering oneself, and abstracting oneself, are diverse and perhaps at opposite poles from each other. One abstracts one's attention from something, which is as much as to say, one leaves it, leaves it aside, perhaps even leaves it in the lurch; 'ingatheredness', on the other hand, is essentially a state in which one is drawing nearer something, without abandoning anything. 'Contemplation', he says, 'is not a matter merely of turning inwards, of *introversion*, but of *conversion*—seeing oneself from the other man's point of view'; therefore 'to enter into the depths of one's self means here fundamentally to get out of oneself'—observations which make one look forward to Marcel's further remarks on contemplation. These he has promised for his second volume, in which he will doubtless be as well served by his publishers and translator as in the present one.

DONALD NICHOLL.

THE REVOLT AGAINST REASON. By Arnold Lunn. (Eyre & Spottiswoode; 15s.)

If the existence of God can be demonstrated by reason, atheism must be irrational, and in *The Revolt Against Reason* Mr Lunn is concerned with clarifying 'the contrast between Catholic rationalism and that distrust of the rational which characterises not only Lutheranism and neo-Lutheranism, but also the Victorian sect which usurped the name "rationalist".' He is not defending a thesis so much as demonstrating that the by-products of the revolt against God are 'a revolt against reason, a revolt against holiness and a revolt against beauty'—and what a masterly demonstration it is! The beghards (which should have an accent even in English), the antinomians, the behaviourists, the Freudians, the existentialists, the logical positivists, and of course (for Mr Lunn does not change), the evolutionists are all shown to be without logical foundation, and the rejection of belief in the supernatural is shown to be necessarily connected with the collapse of morality and of beauty, in art and

architecture. There are other good things, too: for example, the influence of Greek philosophy on Christian apologetics and the inevitable relation between pseudo-mysticism and sexual immorality.

Criticisms could be made: more care should have been taken with the proof-reading, the chapters on evolution are rather drawn-out, some of the quotations lose their power to convince because they are dated (e.g., Pavlosky, who wrote in 1920, on the persecution of scientists in Soviet Russia), but one is so grateful for a book which stresses the unity and importance of transcendental values that one has not much enthusiasm for criticising.

This is one of the most powerful negative proofs for the truth of Christianity that I have read for a long time, and after reading it, it is so startlingly clear that if Christianity is not true, there is no order, no truth, no goodness and no beauty in the world. Unity ends with the mushroom growth of religious sects which Luther started; truth ends with the babel of words of Gertrude Stein (p. 207); morality ends with Salvator Dali's 'delirious joy' at kicking his three-year-old sister's head as though it were a football, and Huysman's *'il n'y a de réellement obscènes que les gens chastes'*; and beauty ends with surrealism and cigarette-ends, sea-weed, locks of hair, and sections of rubber tubing glued to a school slate.

It is a fascinating book, interesting, convincing, readable and above all inspiring . . . and if you are ever looking for a present for anyone of average intelligence and over eighteen years of age, for goodness's sake get him this book.

TERENCE TANNER.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM. By Thomas Corbishley, S.J., M.A. (Hutchinson's University Library; 7s. 6d.)

This book is just what its publishers claim for it—an 'account for the general reader of the main tenets and practices of Roman Catholicism'. Fr Corbishley explains, fairly enough, that he has agreed to employ the unnecessary epithet *Roman*, 'not because I regard the qualifying adjective as free from objection, but because it is in possession'. His method is broadly descriptive, not theological and analytical, but the general picture that emerges, though inevitably deficient in detail, is both persuasive and satisfying. If one sometimes has the impression that Fr Corbishley's Catholic is, not indeed 'a sort of super-prig or desiccated intelligence', but an inhabitant of the ideal rather than the real world, that is doubtless because the author has not the space to make the needful qualifications. The book as a whole, clear and readable in its manner, admirably meets the purpose for which it is designed.

One or two points Fr Corbishley may care to consider in a future

edition. For example, his customary clarity deserts him where he is speaking of God's creative act (p. 42): the divine freedom in this is not brought to light, so that the unwary might conclude that creation was 'natural' to God, in the sense of being bound up with his nature. Again, there is a considerable difference between the Pauline antithesis of 'flesh' and 'spirit' and the Platonic opposition of 'body' to 'soul'—a point with which Fr Corbishley, on reflection, would doubtless agree, but which he does not make clear. Why, too, should it be said that it was the 'Philonian logos' (p. 70) that St John applied to our Lord? If it is applicable at all, which is highly questionable, it is to the *person* and not to 'the divine nature'. And would it not have been better to describe the 'ideal solution' to the mal-distribution of property (p. 97) in terms of charity and an overriding sense of justice rather than 'self-control'? But these are rare blemishes; the author has achieved the difficult task of expounding Catholicism to the modern mind with uncommon success. A.G.

THE UNIVERSAL CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY. By A. K. Clarke. (Faber; 8s. 6d.)

This book is exactly what one would expect of a woman teacher, a classical scholar, an ardent Christian and one particularly writing with a Sixth Form in mind, especially the Sixth Form of a girls' public school. Therefore this book is satisfying, as far as it goes, and well worth the attention of any who either wish to prove the truth that Christianity has a universal character, or doubt that the fact can be proved.

The book is tinged with Church of England ideas and ideals, though on the whole it is impartial and not stressing any special creed. These two sentences of appraisal show both its strength and its weakness.

On the one hand, its lack of definitive teaching and its vague reference to 'the Church', when we know that the Church of England has sects reaching from the Red Dean's tenets to the most fervent High Anglicanism of the Magdalen Mission Church, means lack of coherence as to an exposition of Christianity in a practical form. On the other hand, the writer, by surveying the situation as the critical mind of a Sixth Form girl can see it, gives a completeness to her own concept of universality, and also a rounded finish to her evident desire that the Sixth Form should look for the realisation of her theory in their nearest neighbour the Church of England. It is only fair to add that her emphasis on this last point, however, does not take away from the wide scope and scholarly substance of the book as a whole.

To us who are not Church of England adherents, and who believe one clear creed which must be 'universal', of its very nature, cannot but regret that such a summary omits our historical justification. For after all, the Faith of Wembley's assembly on Sunday, October 1st, 1950, was the Faith of St Augustine in A.D. 596 and the Faith of 'the English Church' until the Parliament of December 1st, 1559.

Still, we value the sincerity and the clarity of this book, and find it of interest to all minds who take the trouble to examine the claim made by it for Christianity.

M. M. MERRICK.

PASCAL'S PENSEES. By H. F. Stewart, D.D. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 21s.)

It is a great tribute to the unfinished work of a seventeenth-century French scientist that this century sees an entirely new edition of the *Pensées*. Perhaps in this materialistic age there is even greater scope for an 'Apology for the Christian Religion' such as Pascal thought out but never achieved. He was writing to convince the free-thinkers of his century of the need for God, and intended to work out on lines of human reasoning this Apology which might bring the honest reader to the threshold of the Church. Although Pascal left only the notes for his masterpiece, these *Pensées* have not ceased to interest thousands and, indeed, to bring the really sincere to supernatural faith.

The task confronting any editor is formidable. Overtaken by ill-health, and realising that his end was near, Pascal took to writing his ideas, as they occurred to him, on any scrap of paper to hand. The problem has always been how to arrange these fragments, some of which are brief notes, others carefully developed arguments in exquisite prose, varying in subject from the minute observations of a scientist to the deeper reflections of a soul of prayer. Professor Stewart attempted this new arrangement of the *Pensées* only after years of thought and careful study, and this fresh edition reveals the same sympathy and understanding of Pascal which previous writings of Professor Stewart have led us to expect. He is to be congratulated on producing so comprehensive and well-proportioned an edition. There is a condensed but instructive Introduction, which shows the balanced judgment of Professor Stewart and his thorough method of dealing with the *Pensées*. Brief and indispensable notes on the text, with short explanations of difficult references, are given at the back, making the reading of the thoughts for their own sake a task far easier than hitherto.

There is an innovation in Professor Stewart's arrangement of the *Pensées*. He has sorted the fragments into those considered suitable

to an 'Apology for the Christian Religion', which form the main part of this edition and are entitled 'Apologia'. Those apparently not connected he has classed as 'Adversaria'. The latter, subdivided under several headings, include such familiar pieces as Pascal's notes on 'Le style et le langage', the Memorial and 'Mystère de Jésus', 'Ecrits sur la Grâce', 'Les Miracles', etc., which in earlier editions, such as Brunschvieg, appeared in groups as part of the Apologia.

The thoughts in Professor Stewart's 'Apologia' follow the plan outlined by Pascal: Part I, treating of man without God; Part II, man with God. While each fragment must always remain unique and precious, Professor Stewart has succeeded in constructing an Apology which reads easily. But the notes on miracles in general should, we feel, have their place in the Apology. Such evidences of the supernatural are a stumbling-block for many persons of good will, and Pascal evidently did not intend to ignore their difficulties. We also miss 'Le Mystère de Jésus' in the arguments concerning our Lord. This fragment again has its appeal to the heart of the free-thinker. Such a meditation on the sufferings of the Redeemer fits in with the thoughts of Christ as centre of the Christian Religion, as we find it placed in the Brunschvieg edition, and should foster that personal love of our Lord and lead more quickly to the surrender of reason at which Pascal was aiming. It might perhaps be helpful if Part I and Part II were given headings.

Students of the language will welcome Professor Stewart's presentation of the text with the old forms of spelling, etc., out of fashion even at the time of Pascal. A good English translation appears on the opposite page.

There is a certain liberty about Professor Stewart's edition of the *Pensées* which makes it most attractive. He has given the material without bias, and does not suppose that his own arrangement is final. It is a scholarly work, which commends itself to scholars, but it is hoped that this edition will go further than merely academic circles. The *Pensées* should appeal to all who use their minds. The next step is to have the thoughts of Pascal compared with St Thomas, and we would like to have a theologian's opinion on the supposed Jansenism of this great French author.

S. M. AGNES, O.P.

DE LA SALLE, SAINT AND SPIRITUAL WRITER. By W. J. Battersby, Ph.D. (Longmans; 14s.)

Dr Battersby has followed up his study of St John Baptist de la Salle, pioneer of modern education, with a second volume on the saint and spiritual writer. It will be a pity if readers who have admired the work do not now become better acquainted with the

spirit of the man who conceived and initiated it, and who has been proclaimed Patron of Teachers. For while his method has been retained and developed in modern education, his ideal and inspiration have largely disappeared. Utilitarianism, philanthropy even, are poor substitutes for the heroic love of God and man which is the driving power in the soul of a saint.

In this book de la Salle stands out vividly against the background of the France of 'Le roi soleil': formed in the school of St Sulpice, owing much to contemporary reforms of religious life, reacting violently and at no small cost to the success of his work against the poison of the Jansenist heresy. Dr Battersby excels at 'placing' his character in its historical setting and these early chapters should be of interest to all students of seventeenth-century France.

The spirit of faith, which inspired de la Salle to renounce all that wealth and nobility could offer in order to minister to the forsaken poor—and perhaps in no other age would this sacrifice have been so great—emerges as his dominant characteristic, but his devotion to the Holy Child and to the ideal of spiritual childhood is of special interest in the light of the trend of modern spirituality. (The Archconfraternity of the Holy Child Jesus, established at Bethlehem in 1923 with the aims that God may have the first place in every home and school, that teachers and children may everywhere enjoy full religious liberty, that children attending Godless schools may preserve their faith and virtue intact, and that apostolic vocations may be multiplied and children everywhere be blessed with Christian teachers, deserves to be widely known.)

Dr Battersby, quoting extensively from the saint's own writings, successfully dispels the impression of harshness and over-severity left by earlier biographers and emphasises the gentleness and serenity which characterise the portrait now at Douai Abbey, the serenity of a soul which lives always in the presence of God and strives to perform every action not from any human motive or impulse but by 'the guidance of God, through the movement of his Spirit, and with the intention of pleasing him'. That was his ideal of sanctity, and this book should help its realisation by those whose vocation is similar to his own.

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.

PRISCILLA LYDIA SELLON: *The Restorer After Three Centuries of the Religious Life in the English Church*. By Thomas Jay Williams (S.P.C.K.; 20s.)

Miss Sellon was the daughter of a naval officer. In 1848 she founded the Anglican religious community, known as the Society of the Holy Trinity, at Devonport. The multifarious works of charity

undertaken by a few Sisters, not to mention the austerity of the Rule, during the first years of their existence, baffle description. Heroic work was done during a cholera epidemic in the Three Towns before some of the Sisters joined the band of nurses who accompanied Miss Nightingale to Scutari and the Crimea. Some years later the Society of the Holy Trinity was amalgamated with the Sisterhood of the Holy Cross, founded in London in 1845, and Mother Lydia directed their activities in a masterful manner. She had to face bitter opposition, even fierce persecution. Her own Society was composed of three grades or 'Orders'—Sisters of Mercy, the Company of the Love of Jesus (strictly enclosed), and Sisters of Charity. The last-named were made up of two groups—Blue and Grey Sisters. When the headquarters was moved from Devonport to Ascot Priory in 1860, the First and Third Orders ceased to exist. Since then the nuns at Ascot have done no work outside their enclosure, but have maintained a hospital for convalescents and in recent years a small school for girls. They were the first Anglican community to work on the foreign missions, and from 1864 to 1918 kept a few Sisters in the Honolulu Islands, where they were invited to make a foundation by Queen Emma.

Their spirit, Rule and habit incorporate features taken from many pre-Reformation Orders—Benedictine, Colletine and Carmelite in particular. In choir they still recite the Sarum Breviary, translated by one of their first members under the direction of Dr Pusey. Watches for continuous intercession are kept up, especially for the re-union of Christendom. The Carmelite-Poor Clare spirit of their lives is exemplified by the white cloaks worn in choir and their bare feet and sandals. This remarkable biography of a remarkable woman will be an indispensable source of reference to students of the second phase of the Oxford Movement. Moreover, the style is so readable that one forgets that this fascinating romance must have involved years of patient research.

PETER F. ANSON.

FOLLOW SAINT PATRICK. By Oliver St John Gogarty. (Constable; 12s. 6d.)

This is a new edition of a book first published in 1938. Dr Gogarty's books are talks put down on paper; this one is a monologue spoken during a journey to those places claiming an association with St Patrick, including the five main claimants to the honour of his birth-place. The argument is in favour of St David's, in Wales. It is pressed in a leisurely fashion, and courteously. In its course, and through all the rest of the book, there are entertaining digressions as something prompts a story or a reflection. There are wise and

witty and mischievous things in it, and much that is finely said. If there are any who do not know St Patrick, here is an introduction which will lead them to the standard lives; and in an appendix they can read the Saint's most famous writing, the *Confession*. And here, for anyone, is a pleasant book to read on winter evenings.

ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.

ST ALBERT, PATRON OF SCIENTISTS. By F. Sherwood Taylor, M.A., D.Phil. Aquinas Paper No. 14. (Blackfriars; 1s.)

It is as Master of St Thomas that St Albert the Great qualifies to be included among the Aquinas Society Papers. In this short pamphlet Dr Sherwood Taylor shows how St Albert was truly a man of science in the modern sense and therefore a fitting example and patron and, one might add, a corrective for scientists of today. For where others feared science he boldly accepted it and studied every aspect of it, yet realised all the while that it is only part of the whole life of man, and can only be explained in relation to God. Our modern specialists will find it hard to imitate the intellectual attainments of this *Doctor Universalis*. 'But we can follow his ideal by aiming at exact truth in our knowledge, the utmost width in our outlook, and the synthesis of all our activities in the service of God.' Dr Sherwood Taylor is himself a shining example of how this can be done.

S.M.A.

A DAILY HYMN BOOK (revised edition): Music edition, 35s.; voice parts only, 4s. (Burns Oates.)

This collection of two hundred and fifty Latin and English hymns has already proved its worth, and a revised edition should earn for it many more users. Its arrangement is specially to be commended with its ample provision for the seasons of the liturgical year and the proper of saints. A Dominican reviewer may perhaps be pardoned for regretting that the latter section finds no room for a Dominican saint. The hymn book must be of great value to convents where the Divine Office is not of obligation, since it provides, both for religious sisters and their pupils, a source of liturgical piety as well as the usual popular hymns familiar to Catholic congregations. Musically the book is of considerable interest, including as it does tunes by Martin Shaw, Vaughan Williams and R. O. Morris, in addition to the melodies traditional in the evening Catholic worship of this country. And the arrangement of the plainchant hymns has the authoritative signature of Dom Desroquettes of Solesmes. As might be expected of the printers (Desclée), the typography and musical engraving is eminently legible.

A.B.

THE IMMACULATE HEART. Litany and Meditations. By Mgr. Johannes Messner. (Mercier Press; 3s.)

Is it fair to base a book of meditations on theological opinions? Mariologists may ask themselves the question when reading Mgr Messner's book. It is a series of most useful meditations on the Litany of the Immaculate Heart. The underlying theology is that of M. J. Scheeben. The faithful who ponder these paragraphs or points (and they take some pondering) will feel that they are penetrating into the world of spiritual wonders which we call Mariology, under the guidance of an expert. And so they are. But few will realise that the Mariology of Scheeben is very far from being the last word on all subjects. His key-theme ('the key to all Mariology', p. 14), which is that of Mary as 'God's bride as well as God's Mother', has not by any means received general acceptance as the first principle of Mariology, though it is no doubt a beautiful and inspiring idea. So small a book packed with so many lovely thoughts deserves general commendation, but for the student of Mariology the presentation may appear somewhat unbalanced. There is a slip in the footnote on p. 22. For 'July 12th' read 'February 12th'. G.M.C.

## EXTRACTS

HOLY SCRIPTURE must ever be the main nourishment, with the Eucharist, of the Christian life. Too often men turn to cut-and-dried textbooks for guidance in the spiritual life when they would find all they need in the Word of God. Perhaps they are too easily discouraged by the literal sense, and it is of interest to find Dom Ralph Russell showing (in *The Downside Review*, winter number) the importance of the 'spiritual sense' and how it is safeguarded by the late Encyclical *Humani Generis*. The 'literal' sense, which is what the author meant when he wrote, contains other, deeper significances, and the words of the Scriptures are always revealing new and deeper vistas, leaving the earthly images and turning towards God himself and his Providence.

Are we not opening the door wide to fanciful interpretations? The answer lies chiefly in the unity of God's providential plan, shown in the Old and New Testaments, and in the fact that events acquire a new and spiritual meaning from God's own revelation of his design.

It is the coming of our Lord that finally 'opens up' the meaning of the Old Testament and gives us a key to untold mysteries in the Bible. For this reason the spiritually minded man must keep his eye constantly on the Word of God.

Fr Sustar gives a practical application of this in *Verbum Domini* (Biblical Institute, Rome), where he has been publishing his studies on the idea of charity in St John. In the current issue he deals with brotherly love in which of course the beloved disciple excelled.

LAY SPIRITUALITY is the subject of the November *Supplément de la Vie Spirituelle*, and it does perhaps elucidate some of the problems raised in the last issue of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT on the question of lay or religious sanctity. The weakness of this symposium lies in the absence of any lay man or woman among its contributors. It sets out, however, to pose the very real question as to the difference (if any) between the various types of Christians. It is often said that Catholic schools run by religious, for instance, unconsciously try to impose a religious type of spirituality on the future adult lay men and women. But the layman is not a mere tool in the hands of an ecclesiastical church; and he has to be established as a full and active member of Christ's Body. Père Serrand makes some suggestions as to the lines upon which this spirituality should be developed:

He should be allowed to be at ease in his faith, not to take his ease with it. He should learn in the Traditions of the Church to know his Bible and its principal sources, to gather its epic sense. In the liturgical community he should not be a paying and passive spectator of a foreign film without sub-titles. He should be prepared in joy and freedom to take on himself truly apostolic responsibilities. . . . In short, rather than treat him as a child in the Church, or as a servant of the Church in the world, he must first be treated in the Church as a brother (according to St Paul), as a friend (according to St John), and the lay spirituality will come of itself.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION the layman needs—up to a point, and *Revista di Vita Spirituale* dedicated its last number of 1950 entirely to the subject. It must always be remembered that the direction given must be aimed at leading the individual to an independence of the director and an immediate dependence on the Supreme Director—the Holy Spirit. For this reason the distinction drawn between 'obedience' and 'docility' in the first article, and emphasised by an editorial note, is of particular importance. The person directed exercises the virtue of docility rather than strict obedience. The only difficulty is that docility seems to apply rather to the mind and obedience to the will. The purpose of direction is to train the will to recognise and follow the divine will; it may be, however, that the humility of mind which is demanded by direction will thus prepare the soul for the more perfect docility which belongs to the Gifts of the Spirit—*docibiles Dei*.

VIRGINAL LOVE is the title of an article by Père Heris in the January *la Vie Spirituelle*—and anything from this author is of course a first-class piece of theology. He discusses St Paul's somewhat pessimistic view of the superior excellence of virginity in relation to wedlock and sets it in relief with St Augustine's and St Thomas's view that virginity's true value comes from the vow by which it dedicates one to the direct service of God, preparing the way for the contemplative life. Thence Père Heris goes on to compare it with the different types of love; some it excludes, others it purifies and perfects. In this way he shows how true spiritual friendships are possible and how they differ from what are often known as 'particular friendships'. The dedicated virginal love does not shun all mankind, but it protects and purifies the love of man in the love of God.

LA VIE SPIRITUELLE for January also gives the full text in French of the Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* which deals with the modifications and adaptations for orders of religious women. LIFE OF THE SPIRIT will be considering this important document later in the year together with the reports of the important congress dealing with the modern needs of religious held in Rome last December. *Esprit et Vie*, which has ceased to be the international literary journal it has been during the last few years and has turned to more specifically religious subjects, has an interesting article on Protestant religious communities with special reference to the now celebrated community at Taizé near Cluny, concluding with the text of their profession ceremony and their horary. The vows are somewhat elaborate as the subject has to attest his vows in six promises. Indeed, with the blessing and giving of the ring the whole ceremony bears close resemblance to the profession of a nun. The horary is admirably balanced between prayer and work.

THE CHURCH AND PEOPLE, which has been struggling for so long, has finally given up the battle. This is a great loss to English popular periodicals as there is nothing to supply the liturgical needs of the people in a way to deepen their understanding of and participation in the worship of the Church. It is to be hoped that it will be soon revived in a more successful form.

DIEU VIVANT (Editions du Seuil; Paris) in its seventeenth number presents a wealth of interest to the 'religious' reader, in particular Simon Franck on the Kingdom of God and the 'World' and Marcel Lorré on the religious ideas of Simone Weil.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

- Blackwell*. H. N. Spalding: A Poem of Praise, 7s. 6d.  
*Burns Oates*. Thomas Merton, o.c.r.: What is Contemplation?, 1s. 6d.; Ronald Knox: A Spiritual Aeneid, 10s. 6d.; Aloysius Roche: Mystery Man, 10s. 6d.; E. Boyd Barrett: Shepherds in the Mist, 7s. 6d.; Francis Trucho: Jeanne Jugan, 15s.  
*Cassell*. Carlo Levi: Of Fear and Freedom, 7s. 6d.; Karl Vollmoeller: The Last Miracle, 15s.  
*Dobson*. Georges Bernanos: Tradition of Freedom, 8s. 6d.  
*Duckett*. Doris Burton: Through a Convert's Window, 7s. 6d.  
*Faber*. A. K. Clarke: The Universal Character of Christianity, 8s. 6d.  
*Fellowship of SS. Alban and Sergius*. A Monk of the Eastern Church: On the Invocation of the Name of Jesus, 2s. 6d.  
*Harvill Press*. Gabriel Marcel: The Mystery of Being—I, n.p.  
*Harvard University Press* (London: *Geoffrey Cumberlege*). Howard Rollin Patch: The Other World, 40s.  
*Hollis and Carter*. Anthony Bertram: The Pleasures of Poverty, 15s.; Charles Péguy: The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc, 12s. 6d.  
*Mercier Press*. Fr Gabriel, o.d.c.: Visions and Revelations in the Spiritual Life, 8s. 6d.; J. Messner: The Immaculate Heart, 3s.; J. V. Matthews, s.j.: Actual Grace and the Spiritual Life, 7s. 6d.  
*Mowbray*. Bede Frost: The Christian Mysteries 8s. 6d.; Father Andrew: Poems, 5s.  
*Nelson*. F. M. Powicke (Editor): Walter Daniel's Life of Ailred, 15s.  
*Newman Press*. Henry Davis, s.j.: St Gregory the Great, Pastoral Care, \$3.00.  
*Officium Libri Catholici (Roma)*. Enchiridion De Statibus Perfectionis I. Documenta Ecclesiae Sodalibus Instituendis, n.p.  
*Oxford University Press*. R. A. Knox: Enthusiasm, 30s.  
*St Xavier's (Liverpool)*. S. S. Myerscough, s.j.: Points for Meditation on the Holy Mass, 6s. 6d.  
*Sheed and Ward*. Leo Tresse: Vessel of Clay, 7s. 6d.; M. R. Loew, o.p.: Mission to the Poorest, 10s. 6d.  
*S.P.C.K.* J. Ninian Comper: Of the Christian Altar and the Buildings Which Contain It, 5s.; J. C. Dickinson: Origin of the Austin Canons, 20s.; Edwin Kenneth Lee: The Religious Thought of St John, 17s. 6d. Thomas Jay Williams: Priscilla Lydia Sellon, 20s.  
*Editions Spes*. Nasri Rizcallah: Charbel Makhlorf, 280 frs.; Raoul Plus, s.j.: Bl. Anne-Marie Javouhey, 215 frs.  
*Talbot and Co*. A. C. Cozens: The Calendar of Saints, 7s. 6d.

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